

2010 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival



ArtsGram

October 18 - 24, 2010



La Crosse, Wisconsin



Hosted by the Tomah VA Medical Center

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

The Festival Begins with Registration...



Veteran Dallas Lee shares a laugh with members of the Wisconsin Challenge Academy located at nearby Fort McCoy.



Of Special Interest Today:



* RCTV Productions and National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) are taping today. (See article on page 3.) Interviews are in the Radisson Art Center Building from 9 - 10 a.m. for artists and from 3 - 4 p.m. for performers.

* VA's Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development have a display and PowerPoint presentation located in the Radisson Ballroom foyer on the first floor. Stop by to see the Veterans' beautiful artwork selected for next year's cover of the Journal. (See photos on page 5.)

* The Artists Interaction is today from 10 - 11:15 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. with a special viewing for our performers from 1 - 2:30 p.m. in La Crosse Center Ballroom, second floor.

* Artists, don't miss the optional tour to the Minnesota Marine Art Museum in Winona, Minn. Buses load at 2 p.m. (See "The Artists Easel" on page 3 for more information.)

* Caricaturists Buzz Balzar, Mike Martino, and Tommy Orrico will be demonstrating the popular art form from 7 - 9 p.m. in the Radisson Hotel Ballroom foyer.

* Performers, rehearsals for solos and narrations are this afternoon, auditions start at 7:30 p.m. both are held in the North Hall, La Crosse Center. (See article on page 2.)

Hosted by the Department of Veterans Affairs, American Legion Auxiliary and Help Hospitalized Veterans



Auditions Take Place Today!

By Liz Mackey, National Director, and Amy Kimbler, Program Specialist, Creative Arts Festival

This year's show is bound to be more enjoyable the more you participate. Please take the opportunity to audition for one of these extra parts in Sunday's show. The following is a list of narrators, soloists and actors needed for a variety of parts this year:

Narrators

- Four narrators to read "Veterans"
- One narrator to read "I Woke"
- One narrator to read "The Dream Keeper"

Actors with speaking parts

- Four narrators for "Fiddler on the Roof" Scene
- Emcee Introduction

Non-Speaking Acting Parts

- Two actors in "Fiddler on the Roof" Scene
- Two actors for "Love and Marriage"
- Six flag bearers to carry in the five service flags and the American flag in the production number, "A Salute to American Service"

Vocal Solos

- One vocal soloists for production number, "Reach"
- One vocal soloist to sing harmony with soloists during, "Reach"
- Two soloists for production number, "Some Gave All"

Small Ensembles

- Back-up singers needed for production number, "Reach"
- Back-up singers needed for group act, "You Don't Count the Cost"
- One small group ensemble to sing on the production number, "Star Spangled Banner"

Sign-up for auditions and rehearsals for solos and narrations will be held today from 1 – 2:30 p.m. in the North Hall of the La Crosse Center in the following rooms. Audition forms must be turned in during these rehearsal times:

North Hall Room #1 – Rehearsal Schedule:

1 – 1:30 p.m.	"Tradition" – anyone wanting to work on this piece
1:30 – 2 p.m.	"I Pledge My Allegiance" – anyone wanting to work on this piece
2 – 2:30 p.m.	"Some Gave All" – two solos

North Hall Room #3 – Rehearsal Schedule:

1 – 1:30 p.m.	"You Don't Count the Cost" – back-up singers
1:30 – 2 p.m.	"Reach" – back-up singers; soloists and harmony soloist
2 – 2:30 p.m.	"Star Spangled Banner" – review and then audition for small ensemble at 2:15 p.m. (if you have sung in the small ensemble in prior years, you do not need to audition again)

North Hall Room #4 – Rehearsal Schedule:

1 – 1:30 p.m.	"Fiddler" actors/speakers (not soloists)
1:30 – 1:45 p.m.	"Love and Marriage" actors
1:45 – 2 p.m.	"Dream Keeper" poem
2 – 2:15 p.m.	Emcee Introduction

See "Auditions," cont'd on page 7

Eight Steps for a Good Audition



1. Make sure you know what you're auditioning for. Have some background information about the topic of your audition and the part you're auditioning for.
2. Once you know what you'll be auditioning for, know what will be asked of you. Are you singing or dancing or acting out a part?
3. If you are given a script and a specific page to read, by all means memorize your lines or know them well enough that you don't have the paper pressed to your nose.
4. Once you have all the lines memorized (or you feel ready enough), take a few deep breaths and get ready for your audition.
5. It's best not to brag to others around you how good you are, and it's even worse to talk about how nervous you are.
6. Once you're called for your audition, take some deep breaths and remind yourself to have a good time.
7. Try not to rush your words or movements, and make sure you move around the stage at least a little.
8. When you're done, say "Thank you." Take some time to chill. Don't analyze your performance - this is a big no-no. If you find out you're in, celebrate!

Wisconsin Series:

Grandad Bluff

by James Theres, Public Affairs Officer, Tomah VA Medical Center



Grandad Bluff is the highest point in La Crosse County rising approximately 590 feet above the surrounding land and 1010 feet above sea level. Sitting on top of the bluff is Grandad Park, which first opened in 1912, and provides a breath-taking view of La Crosse and the surrounding area. On a clear day, you can see all the way to Iowa. Other notable locations visible from Grandad Bluff



include the Mississippi River, the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, the bluffs in Minnesota and Interstate 90. In addition to the scenic overlook, there are trails lining the bluffside for the hiking enthusiast. The land was first purchased by Judge George Gale in July 1851. Between 1851 and 1912, there were 83 property transfers.

Beginning in 1865, limestone rock was quarried from the bluff as it served as a primary source of building material. However, when the property was about to be sold for large scale quarrying, La Crosse citizens were outraged. The last owner, Mrs. Ellis B. Usher, transferred the deed to Joseph Hixon in 1909 until it could be transferred to the city. Her father, Henry Bliss, built the road (Bliss Road) that goes to the top of Grandad. Between 1909 and 1912, local citizens raised \$15,000 to help build additional public roads and facilities.

Today, Grandad Bluff and Grandad Park are prominent features in the La Crosse landscape and play host to weddings, graduations and an annual New Year's Eve fireworks celebration.

RCTV Interviews, NETA and PBS Broadcast

For the fourth consecutive year, the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is proud to be associated with RCTV Productions, Inc. and the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) to highlight the Festival through Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) stations. During the week, the staff of RCTV Productions will tape art workshops, tours, activities and the Oct. 24 show performance as well as record interviews with the Veterans today. NETA will present an edited version of this footage and make it available to PBS stations across the country allowing them the opportunity to air it on or around Veterans Day, 2011.

Look for the broadcast of the 2009 Festival highlights on your local PBS station around Veterans Day 2010.



NVCAF Web site
www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov

Fun Fact Question: What famous author mentions Grandad Bluff in "Life on the Mississippi?"

A. Mark Twain

What is marine art?

Marine art is a genre. It covers any form of figurative art (i.e. painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture) that portrays or draws its main inspiration from the sea and or ships. It was particularly popular from the 17th to 19th centuries. It's also called Maritime Art or Nautical Art.



The maritime theme can include the sea itself, the coast and seaside, ships and sailing craft, beaches and wildlife, portraits and people, history, or anything else that goes with the sea. Ships and boats can be naval, commercial or for leisure; use sail or steam and be historical or present day.

This afternoon you will be visiting the Minnesota Marine Art Museum in Winona. The Museum features four galleries of world-class art and artifacts and is located in a unique building and picturesque setting on the banks of the Mississippi River. Along with a new gallery featuring Impressionism and Hudson River School artists, the museum exhibits marine art rotating from one of the finest private collections in the country. You will view whimsical folk art from the Leo Smith Collection and images of the Mississippi River by 19th century photographer Henry Bosse. In addition, there are over 60,000 native plants and grasses to stroll and enjoy along the riverwalk. Enjoy your tour!

Soaring to Artistic Heights Festival Photos



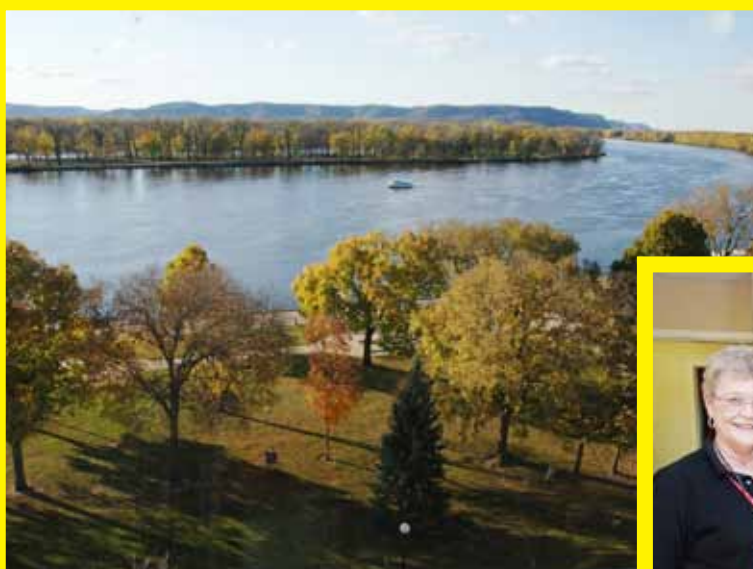


JRRD

Journal of Rehabilitation Research & Development



**Award winning artwork
selected for the front
cover of the Journal of
Rehabilitation Research
and Development.**



Behind the Scenes... with the Local Organizing Committee

The planning that goes into organizing a national event like the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is extensive. The local organizing committee (LOC) in Tomah has been planning this week's event for the past three years and has given their all to ensure the Festival's success.

During the course of the planning process, many challenges present themselves. All of the details, big and small alike, are part of the bigger picture. Some of the details include working with vendors to ordering memorabilia and costumes, developing the menu and bus schedule and helping with fundraising efforts to support the Festival.

There are also a number of other planning items that must be considered as well, such as arranging for lodging, organizing special events and off-site trips, and of course choreographing the art exhibit and stage show at the end of the week. According to the Festival's National Director, Elizabeth Mackey, selecting these venues can be one of the toughest challenges they face.

Another huge undertaking is coordinating the facility talent competitions that will ultimately determine the guest list for the upcoming Festival. More than 3,500 Veterans and 123 VA medical facilities were involved this year. The issues

that can arise during these efforts must be corrected to ensure that the selection process runs smoothly.

One internal challenge for the Creative Arts Festival is the communication between the national team and the hosting medical facility. Communication between associates within the same time zone is difficult enough, but the LOC must coordinate meeting times that are convenient for staff throughout the United States.

Despite the activities involved in planning this event, the rewards from the effort far outweigh any challenges and the LOC has the privilege of witnessing first-hand the creative process that the participating artists undergo.

The Festival is a wonderful example of how the Veterans use the arts as a positive influence in their lives, and this resonates throughout every community that has played host to this wonderful event. It is a truly inspiring and rewarding experience for everyone involved in this annual program.



A Day at the Festival with Lonnie Hicks & Johnathan Starks



Lonnie Hicks
Artist
Honolulu, Hawaii

I started working with arts and crafts as a way to control my severe chronic pain and get more social interaction - my pain and disabilities had made me a shut-in. I started going to the arts and crafts class at the Pacific Islands VA Healthcare System once a week. While in these classes I would concentrate so hard, I entered the "zone" - my pain was blocked out. When I realized this was happening, I started doing my arts and crafts projects

at home and my projects got better and better. Three years ago I felt confident enough to enter the local Festival. This year I won and was invited to the National Creative Arts Festival. To say the very least, the VA's arts and crafts have taken me to an outgoing vital person who is living life to the fullest! I am excited to be here this week and meet all of you.

We have asked two of our Veterans (one an artist and the other a performer) to give us a daily update of their impressions and insights each day of the Festival. Today we read their thoughts about coming to the Festival.



Johnathan Starks
Performer
Anchorage, Alaska

I competed in the Festival for my first time this year while I was in the VA domiciliary at the Alaska VA Healthcare System. Ron McCampbell, my sponsor, and I started singing karaoke together and people thought we were so good they told us we needed to sing in the Anchorage Creative Arts Festival in January. The first song we sang together became our signature song - "Night-shift" by the Commodores. We were so

excited to learn we had won locally and nationally. Since winning we have started a karaoke phenomenon in Anchorage - singing for VFW and American Legion functions and have even been asked to sing in local karaoke competitions. My beautiful "angel" wife Kimberly came into my life this year, too. We like karaoke so much we had a karaoke reception at our wedding. I am excited to be here and look forward to meeting everyone.

Inside the Media Center

by Kristi Nuckols Bell, Staff Assistant, National Programs and Special Events

You may have met some of the Festival's public affairs staff at registration, but you might still be curious about our efforts throughout the week. The Festival has its own dedicated public affairs crew comprised of VA staff from all over the Nation. They are onsite this week knocking on doors, shouting from mountain tops and writing story upon story - all to alert the media of the wonderful things you are up to this week.

The daily newsletter, the *ArtsGram*, is a tremendous feat, which we hope you're enjoying. Our staff worked diligently in the weeks leading up to the event to make sure all of these stories are accurate and provide you with pertinent and interesting columns about the Festival. If you have any interesting stories to share about your week, please stop by the Illinois Room to see us.

Your stories are so inspirational that not only local but national media take notice. Press releases, media pitching and onsite visits from media organizations all help to spread the word about how you're healing through the arts. By facilitating on camera and phone interviews as well as providing photos, our team is assisting reporters in telling the Nation about your accomplishments.

The public affairs photographers are out there each day snapping pictures of your latest painting, rehearsal or La Crosse tour. They love to see those smiling faces - something we're sure will be in abundance as the week progresses. The photographs taken during the week will be used in the *ArtsGram* as well as for media pitching efforts and promotional publications for 2011. Be sure to smile big and have a wonderful week here in beautiful La Crosse!

"Auditions" cont'd from page 2

Zielke Suite, 2nd floor - Rehearsal Schedule:

1 - 1:30 p.m.	"I Woke" narration
1:30 - 2 p.m.	"Veterans" narration
2 - 2:30 p.m.	"A Salute to American Service" flag bearers

Auditions for "You Don't Count the Cost" and "Reach" back-up singers will be held THIS AFTERNOON from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. in the North Hall.

Beginning at 7:30 p.m., individuals who have turned in an audition form will be called out of the chorus rehearsals to audition for their desired solos, narrations, dance parts or small ensemble in the Small Rehearsal Room #1 in the La Crosse Center.

Tuesday Meal Times:

Breakfast

Artists and Performers —
7 - 8:30 a.m.

Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Lunch

Artists — 12:15 - 1:30 p.m.

La Crosse Center Ballroom

Performers — Noon - 1 p.m.

Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Dinner

Artists — 6 - 7 p.m.

Performers — 5:30 - 6:45 p.m.

Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Breakfast Buffet

Fluffy scrambled eggs with scallions; home-style fried potatoes; bacon and sausage; fresh seasonal fruit; assorted fresh baked goods; assorted cereals/oatmeal; assorted low-fat yogurts; assorted juices; coffee, herbal teas, milk

Lunch Buffet

Caesar salad; penne and bowtie pasta; marinara, alfredo, and meat sauces; Italian vegetables; garlic toast and bread sticks; fudge brownie; coffee, hot tea, iced tea

Dinner Buffet

Gathered green Salad with choice of dressings; Gorgonzola stuffed pork loin; oven roasted potatoes; cheddar mashed potatoes; fresh steamed vegetables; dinner breads; chocolate peanut butter landslide mousse pie; coffee, hot tea, iced tea

M Festival Menu



Weather

Today



High 58

Low 30

Tomorrow



High 60

Low 33

Today's Festival Schedule

Artists

Performers

Tuesday, October 19	
7 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
7 – 8:30 a.m.	Late Registration – Wisconsin I, Radisson Hotel, first floor
9 a.m. – 11 p.m.	Hospitality Room Open – Mississippi Suite #823
8:30 a.m.	Teams 8 and 9 report to Radisson Art Center Building for photos
9 a.m.	Teams 10 and 11 report to Radisson Art Center Building for photos
9 – 10 a.m.	RCTV videotape interviews – Radisson Art Center Building
10 – 11:15 a.m.	Artist Interaction Session begins – La Crosse Center Ballroom, second floor
11:15 a.m.	Break
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Interaction Session continues and completes
12:15 – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch – La Crosse Center Ballroom
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.	Performers view visual artwork – Radisson Art Center Building
2 p.m.	Board buses for the Minnesota Marine Art Museum in Winona, Minnesota
6 – 7 p.m.	Dinner – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
7 – 9 p.m.	Caricaturists – Radisson Hotel Ballroom Foyer
9 – 11 p.m.	Karaoke & Social Time – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor

Tuesday, October 19	
7 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor Late Registration – Wisconsin I, Radisson Hotel, first floor
8:20 a.m.	Check in with team leaders – North Hall, La Crosse Center, first floor
8:30 a.m.	Introductions, announcements and rehearsal begins for ALL stage performers and staff – North Hall, La Crosse Center, first floor
9 a.m. – 9 p.m.	Chorus vests/costume fittings – North Hall, La Crosse Center (break for lunch from Noon - 1 p.m. and dinner from 5:30 - 7 p.m.)
Noon – 1 p.m.	Lunch – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
1 – 2:30 p.m.	- All solo & group acts have pictures taken IN COSTUMES – North Hall, La Crosse Center - Performers view visual artwork – Radisson Art Center Building - Rehearsal and sign up for audition solos and narration – Zielke Suite, North Hall, La Crosse Center
2:30 – 5 p.m.	- Rehearsals continue (Act 2) – North Hall, La Crosse Center - Chorus music rehearsal with chorus leader & sectional assistants - North Hall, La Crosse Center
3 – 4 p.m.	RCTV videotape interviews – North Hall, La Crosse Center
5:30 – 6:45 p.m.	Dinner – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor
7 – 9 p.m.	Chorus number rehearsal with music director (All show participants) – North Hall, La Crosse Center
7:30 p.m.	Auditions begin for solos & narrations – North Hall, La Crosse Center
9 – 11 p.m.	Karaoke & Social Time – Radisson Hotel Ballroom, first floor



Artists and Performers:
Please check with your team leader and/or the posted schedule outside of the Radisson Hotel Ballroom for any changes or updates to your daily schedule.



► The **Hospitality Room**, sponsored by the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary, is located in the Radisson Hotel, Mississippi Suite #823.

Hours: Today, Wednesday, Thursday – 9 a.m. - 11 p.m.;
Friday – 9 a.m. - Midnight; Saturday – 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Sunday – 10 a.m. - Noon and 10 p.m. - Midnight

► The **Medical Room** is located in the Iowa Room, on the second floor of the Radisson Hotel.

- Daily hours are: 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
- Use ext. 459 inside the Radisson Hotel; outside of the hotel please call (608) 784-6680 and ask for ext. 459.
- After 10 p.m., call room 214 for emergencies.
- During the Festival, please let your team leader know of any medical concerns. They will help you.

- Medical personnel, wearing bright blue jackets, will accompany Veterans on all trips and tours.

► The **Festival Internet Café** is once again sponsored by HP and is located in the Radisson Hotel, Minnesota Room on the second floor. Thank you, HP, for providing this valuable service to our Veterans!

Today	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; and 7 - 9 p.m.
Wednesday	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; and 7 - 9 p.m.
Thursday	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Friday	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.; and 7 - 9 p.m.
Saturday	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Sunday	7 - 8:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

